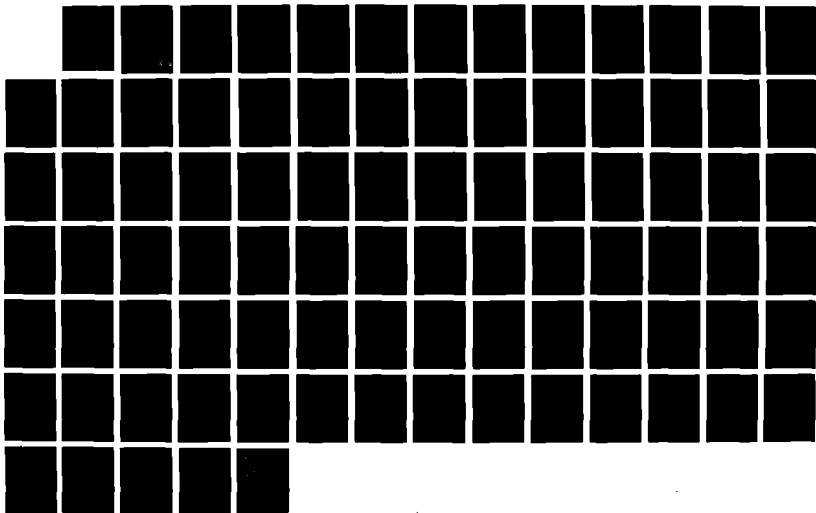


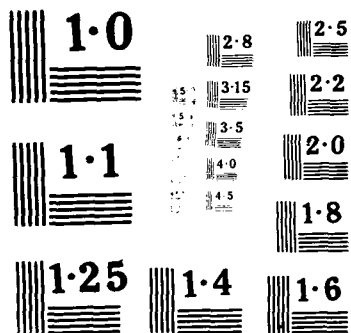
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THE EFFECTS OF UNITED STATES NAVAL FORCES
DEPLOYED TO THE PERSIAN GULF

A thesis presented to the faculty of the
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

LARRY D. CARR, LCDR, U.S. NAVY
B.A., Savannah State University, 1974

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1989

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119. sufficient number of ships and personnel to win them. Operations in the Persian Gulf are successfully completed only by having the ships and men of the fleet to their aid.

The paper ends with five recommendations which increase the Navy's ability to continue this type of crisis response.

1. The Navy should maintain a fleet of ships and personnel capable of responding to a crisis.

2. The Navy should maintain a fleet of ships and personnel capable of responding to a crisis.

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other government agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF UNITED STATES NAVAL FORCES DEPLOYED TO
THE PERSIAN GULF. BY LCDR Larry D. Carr. USN. 79
pages.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the US Navy's ability to surge its forces to meet crises is and still meet its day-to-day commitments.

This study reviewed the 43 treaties and agreements the U.S. has with other nations and the strategy and policies of the U.S. in support of these agreements. The study then examined the effect of these agreements. The study then examined the effect of these agreements, policies, and strategies on the Navy. Key areas of personnel and materiel readiness are the examined.

As a case study, the paper used the U.S. responses to the crises in the Persian Gulf from 1970 to the present. These crises are typical of the employment of Naval forces to show U.S. interest in world affairs and are the most recent crises the nation has faced. The author was part of the forces deployed to meet this crisis.

The research showed that the Navy's ability to surge its forces and continue to meet its every day commitments is limited. The Navy lacks a sufficient number of ships and the personnel to man them. The mission in the Persian Gulf was successfully completed only by pushing the ships and men of the fleet to their limit.

The paper concludes with five proposals which will increase the Navy's ability to continue this type of crisis intervention and still be prepared to meet its day-to-day commitments in support of U.S. policy.

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Navy's ability to surge its forces to meet unexpected crises in the world and still maintain its day-to-day operations and meet planned commitments is severely limited.

There are several reasons for this. These include severe budget constraints, reductions in defense spending and a public attitude that the military has been too wasteful with its monies and resources in the past.

However, if the Navy is to carry out its mission, a suitable balance between military needs and available resources must be achieved.¹ If not, the competition for dollars and operational requirements in this resource scarce environment will surely hamper the Navy's ability to achieve the U.S. national and international political and military objectives.

The national political and military objectives of the United States are to maintain its security and that of its allies and to deter threat or aggression.² To achieve these objectives, each of the U.S. armed forces has been assigned a mission.

The mission of the U.S. Navy is to be prepared to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea in support of U.S. national interests: in effect, it must

assure continued maritime superiority for the United States. This means that the U.S. Navy must be able to defeat, in the aggregate, potential threat aircraft, surface ships, and submarines which threaten the seaborne forces of the United States and its allies.³

The Persian Gulf operations of the U.S. Navy between 1971 and 1989 demonstrate how crisis incidents in the world affected normal operations of the Navy. The lessons to be learned from these incidents can better prepare the U.S. to deal with similar crises in the future.

When crises and regional conflicts have arisen, the Navy has normally been used for shows of force. Such actions have made it more difficult for the Navy, with its fixed number of ships, to continue to routinely deploy its forces to meet day-to-day commitments and concurrently react to the crisis.

The U.S. Navy has had great difficulty in responding to crises. This problem was evident during the Cuban crisis, the Vietnam war, the Iranian hostage situation, and, most recently, the Persian Gulf operations in the 1980's. Although the U.S. Navy was relatively successful in each of these crisis situations, the incidents clearly highlighted the same major problem--the U.S. Navy's capability to surge its forces to meet crises and still meet its day-to-day operational commitments is severely limited. It is limited

primarily by the size of the Navy, both in terms of ships and personnel.

The scarcity of overseas bases further magnified this difficulty. Overseas bases are vital to supporting forward deployed forces. Logistic support is crucial to the success of military operations. Unfortunately, the U.S. lacks logistic facilities needed to support operations, in the Indian Ocean, especially during crises.⁴ The scarcity of overseas bases does not permit the Navy to pre-position its forces to respond quickly to crisis situations.⁵ The ability to contain and control local crises is an important factor in the U.S. ability to prevent a global crisis. As a result ships must be forward deployed to meet unexpected crises. This is particularly true with the U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf.

A case study of the Cuban crisis or Vietnam could be used to demonstrate the ability of the U.S. to surge naval forces to meet global crises. However, the author has chosen to use the Persian Gulf operation from 1970 to the present.

There are three reasons for this. First, the Persian Gulf crisis was the most recent crisis in which the U.S. used naval forces to protect its national interest and support its political strategy. Second, because it took place so far from U.S. shores Persian Gulf operation best highlights the problems the U.S. encountered in deploying, and sustaining forces in distant waters.

Finally, the author has a great deal of first-hand experience with the problems the Navy had surging its forces to meet the U.S. political and military objectives in the Persian Gulf. This experience came from extensive tours of duty in the area in 1979 and again in 1981.

Although the U.S. has been in the Persian Gulf since 1940, only the period from 1971 to the present will be discussed here. Because the British were committed to maintaining stability in the Persian Gulf during the period from 1940 to 1971, the U.S. did not have a requirement to send forces to the area other than to "show the flag."

The period from 1970 to present is composed of two subperiods 1971 to 1979, and 1979 to the present. The fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 was a major turning point in U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf. The author has used this event as the break point for his discussion: one period ends and the second begins in the same year 1979.

In discussing U.S. Persian Gulf operations during these time periods, the author will focus on four major areas. These areas are:

1. The U.S. national interest and naval power: past, present, and future.
2. U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf from 1971 to 1979.
3. U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf from 1979 to the present.

4. Effects of the Persian Gulf commitments on U.S. Naval personnel and material.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. U.S. commitments will not decrease.
2. Nothing will occur that will make it possible to alter the basic number of ships needed to meet commitments.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS. The total monies available to the Navy to perform all its functions of the United States.
2. PERSONNEL. The trained members of the Navy required to operate and maintain the fleet. This does not include personnel in training schools.
3. READINESS. The ability of naval units to respond to national commitments within a timeframe dictated by operation plans.
4. FORCE STRUCTURE. The number, size, and composition of force that comprise our defense forces.
5. FORCE SUSTAINABILITY. The staying power of the forces.

6. MATERIEL READINESS. The inventory of equipment and supplies on hand relative to war time requirements.

7. FORCE MODERNIZATION. The technical sophistication of all the elements of the force.

8. UNIFIED COMMAND. A command with a broad and continuing mission under a single commander and composed of significant assigned components of two or more services, and established and designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, or, when so authorized by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, by a commander of an existing unified command established by the President.⁶

9. INTERESTS. The wants or needs of a state, its concerns for its own well being or advantage. Interests are central to any discussion of international relation and national strategy. States use the term interest to signal their intention to other states. A state could use military force or diplomatic means to protect their interests.

10. COMMITMENTS. The obligations to support an ally or allies whose interests have been violated. These commitments are the result of treaties, executive agreements, statements or pledges of top officials, legislation, Congressional resolutions and informal agreements.

11. INDIAN OCEAN OPERATING AREA. An operating area of the U.S. Navy which is composed of the Indian Ocean and the adjacent seas and gulfs, including the Persian Gulf (see figure 1 on page 7).

12. SOUTHWEST ASIA. The Southwestern part of the Asian Continent which abuts Europe and Africa. This area includes the countries on the Persian Gulf and Arabian peninsula.

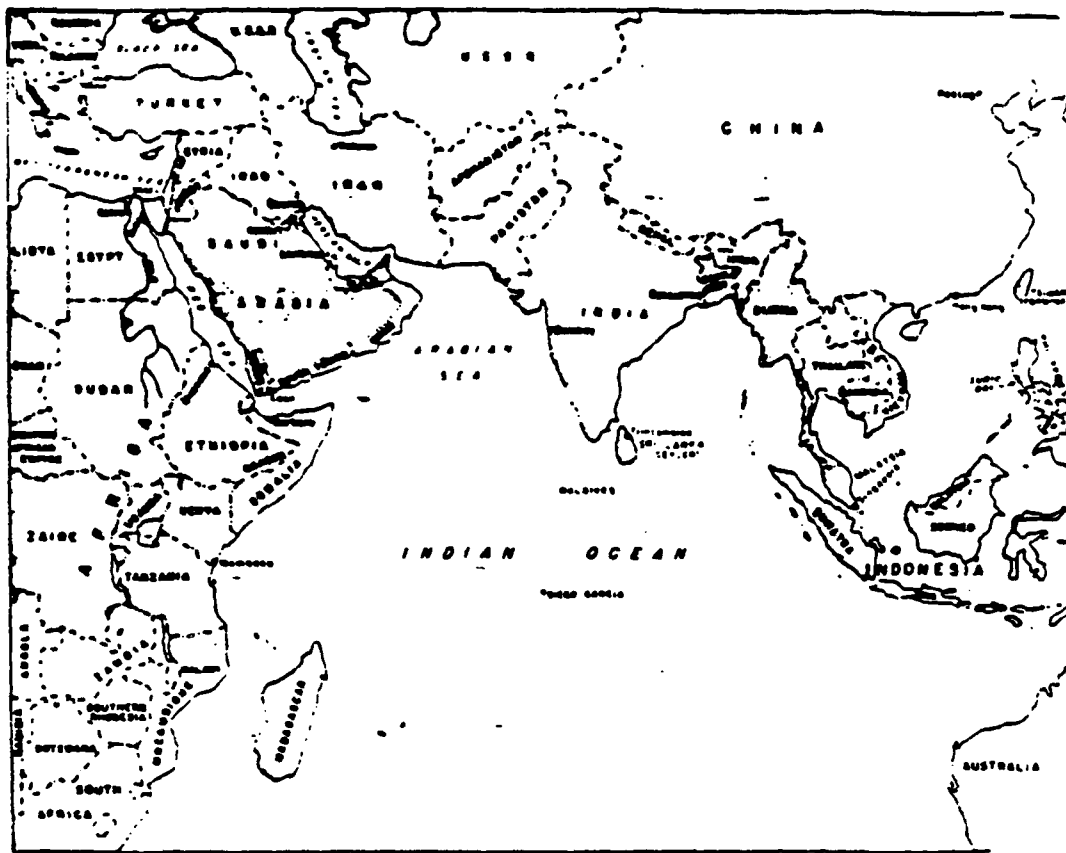


Figure 1. Map of Southwest Asia.

Source: E.D. Potter. Sea Power: A Naval History.
Annapolis, MD. Naval Institute Press. 1982. P.126

LIMITATIONS

A tremendous amount of information has been written about the Persian Gulf and the Navy's role there. However, a large amount of it is classified and could not be used in this unclassified paper. Operations in the Persian Gulf are ongoing and many of the evaluations and analytical reports of recent events (1987-88) including those by the Center for Naval Analysis, the Brookings Institute and the Center for Strategic and International Studies--are still in draft form. These agencies do not release preliminary drafts of their reports and studies.

To compensate for the limitations imposed by classification and unavailability, the author used more nonmilitary papers, periodicals, professional opinions, personal experiences and information and opinions received in telephone conversations to support the thesis research.

Specific data concerning which ships were deployed and how long they stayed in the Persian Gulf came from various naval commands and from government studies. The cost to deploy ships to the Persian Gulf and its effects upon readiness came from government studies.

DELIMITATIONS

All branches of the U.S. armed forces have been involved in some type of military operation in the Persian Gulf. This paper focuses only on the U.S. Navy's role during the period from 1971 to 1988. Of the Navy's assets used in the Persian Gulf, this study will not address subsurface ships or aircraft because they do not visibly demonstrate long term power projection to other states in the way surface ships do.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant because the U.S. government and military forces can learn from their successes and mistakes. Successes must be documented so that others may duplicate them, and lessons learned must be evaluated to preclude repeated failures. Only through evaluating, analyzing and reviewing problems can the government and the military become better prepared to handle such crises. Studies are also vital to the professional development of military officers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research for this study came from the following sources:

1. The Annual Reports to Congress from the Secretary of the Defense from 1970-1989. These reports provided data on the number of ships the U.S. has had in the fleet since 1971. The reports also addressed congressional spending or cutbacks that affected the Navy's shipbuilding program. This information enabled the author to compare the budget with available forces; demonstrate a direct link between maritime strategy, budgets, and the Persian Gulf; and correlate the readiness, force commitment, and personnel of the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf.

2. Congressional Appropriation Hearings from 1970 to the present. Various Chiefs of Naval Operation presented information at there hearings concerning the Navy's maritime strategy, how the Navy meets its commitments, and what assets it needs to do so. These hearings also highlighted why the Persian Gulf was vital to the U.S. They discussed when the U.S. and its allies began to depend on more oil from the region and when and why the Soviets increased their presence there.

3. Periodicals and Newspapers. These sources listed in the bibliography, provided informed reactions to events as they occurred in the Persian Gulf. Further, since many of the most publicized events are relatively recent precise analysis of these events is still being conducted, and no definitive works have been published. The information and opinions expressed in these periodicals and newspapers, therefore represent the best expression of current thought on the subject.

4. Published works. Books published by noted military leaders, some who have had experience in the Persian Gulf, provided insights into the development of the strategy of the United States for Southwest Asia and the events which occurred there. As stated before, no definitive works have been published on recent naval operations in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea, but the positions these authors have held in the military and government lend credibility to their works.

5. Statistical data. Data referred to in this study came directly from Navy staff offices responsible for collecting it. The figures represent raw data which is being used in an on going military analysis underway at the time of this writing.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The author will demonstrate that the U.S. Navy's ability to surge its forces to meet an unexpected crisis in the world and still maintain its day-to-day operations while meeting planned commitments is severely limited.

The paper will also discuss personnel and readiness shortfalls and how they have affected, and will continue to affect, the Navy's ability to station ships in the Persian Gulf and still concurrently, meet all of its global commitments today--and in the future.

Data collection will rely on two primary sources--a review of published materials, and statistical information this author gathered from Navy staffs. The published materials consisted of newspaper articles, case studies, evaluation reports and various books on Naval strategy and operations in the Persian Gulf. This author gathered the statistical data by telephone, from the following Navy staffs: Commander-In-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT); Commander-In-Chief of the Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT); Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON Ten) and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON Ten). The author examined this information as it pertained to the periods 1971-1979 and from 1979-1988.

Notes

- ¹ Charles Mohr. "Stress Allies' Roles and Rein on Spending". New York Times. 21 March 1983. p.12.
- ² Admiral J. McDonald. "Interview with Admiral J. McDonald, Commander In Chief U.S. Atlantic Fleet" by Judy J. McCoy and Schemer, Benjamin. Armed Forces Journal International. April 1985. p. 66-72.
- ³ NWP 1 (Rev.A). Strategic Concepts Of The U.S. Navy, (Washington D.C.: Department Of The Navy Office Of The Chief Of Naval Operations.1987) p.1-3-1
- ⁴ Jeffrey Record. The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S.Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf. (Cambridge, MA and Washington, D.C.: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis.1981) p.27.
- ⁵ Navy and Marine Corps. Student Text 100-1 (Fort Leavenworth KS: US Army Command and General Staff College. June 1988) p.4.
- ⁶ AFSC PUB 1. The Joint Staff Officer's Guide 1985. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office) p.339

CHAPTER 1

The United States, being a maritime nation, depends heavily on the seas for access to raw materials and markets. The control of vital ocean areas and key transit points is essential to U.S. security economic stability and protection of its interests world-wide. This chapter describes U.S. national interests and objectives and how naval power is used in part, to protect these interests and achieve the desired objectives.

The U.S. is frequently forced to take some type of action to protect its interests in the world when crises or incidents arise that threaten those interests. These actions may be diplomatic or military. The Navy has been the force of choice in most cases. When the United States uses the Navy to counter unexpected crises in addition to meeting its day-to-day commitments, the Navy has had to make significant adjustments in its assets and resources. These adjustments have involved deploying ships for longer periods of time, shifting monies from other areas to support the deployment and straining human resources. In making these adjustments the Navy has pushed its ships, people, and resources to the limit.

If the Navy's resources and capabilities continue to be pushed to the limit, normal operations, fleet readiness and morale will suffer irrevocable harm. To preclude this

negative effect on the Navy's ability to carry out its mission. the Navy must improve its ability to surge its forces and resources to meet unexpected crises and conflicts. To do this. the size of the Navy. in terms of both ships and personnel. needs to be increased.

The U.S. Navy's desired fleet size is based on three primary considerations. The first one is geographic. Three quarters of the world is covered by water and the Navy must be ready to respond any where on it. The second consideration is the U.S.'s forty-three treaty relationships with other countries. Third. but certainly not least. is the growing Soviet fleet with its ever increasing global influence.¹

Naval historians generally credit the U.S. Navy's ability to react defensively to protect our world-wide interests to Alfred Thayer Mahan. Mahan wrote his principles of seapower in 1890. One of his principles is that "vital choke points were critical to control of the seas." In addition. he wrote "a nation must have maritime commerce and a strong Navy to dominate or influence world markets. As a maritime nation. the U.S. has inescapable global responsibilities."²

To meet these global responsibilities. the Navy developed the maritime strategy in 1980. The Maritime Strategy is based on and supports the U.S. national strategy.³ The Maritime Strategy revolved around three

important points: deterrence or the transition to war;
seizing the initiative; and carrying the fight to the enemy.

The 600 ship Navy is the means for executing the Maritime Strategy. The size of the fleet was based on an estimate of the number and type of ships needed to contain and control a crisis before it escalated into a war.⁴

As former President Ronald Reagan stated. "The U.S. must develop the military capability to repel a full scale invasion without significant assistance from its allies."⁵

A larger U.S. Navy was a critical part of this increased capability. A larger Navy, consisting of 600 ships with 15 carrier battlegroups would "...restore and maintain maritime superiority over the Soviet as well as protect U.S. objectives and interest anywhere in the world."⁶

In his book Command of the Seas, John Lehman, the former Secretary of the Navy also supported the need for a 600 ship Navy said "The size of the fleet is dictated by the maritime strategy and the separate requirements of each of the different geographic theaters, the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf."⁷

The U.S. National Security Strategy supports the following interests:

"1. The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure.

2. A healthy and growing U.S. economy to provide opportunity for individual prosperity and a resource base for our national endeavors.

3. A stable and secure world, free of major threats to U.S. interests.

4. The growth of human freedom, democratic institutions, and free market economies throughout the world, linked by a fair and open international trading system.

5. Healthy and vigorous alliance and relationships.⁵ "The protection of these interests led the U.S. to enter into commitments with other nations in the form of international treaties and agreements. Specific examples include multilateral alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and bilateral agreements with Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Australia.

The threat to these treaties and U.S. security interests, according to the Reagan Administration (1981-89), is the Soviet military.⁹

The military growth of the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the Soviets building up a military force equal to the U.S. and being able to use its Navy to influence and promote communism world-wide.¹⁰

Between 1969 and 1979 the U.S. had no formal agreement or treaty for defense of the Middle East other than through the Nixon Doctrine (President Richard M. Nixon, 1969-74). The

Nixon Doctrine was specifically designed to prevent the U.S. from becoming involved in another Vietnam. It did not commit the U.S. to supplying military forces. It put the burden of security on the threatened country with material support from the U.S. This Doctrine stated that:

The United States will keep all of its treaty commitments. We shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us, or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security and the security of the regions as a whole. In cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested and as appropriate. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its own defense.¹¹

Not until the 1979 Carter Doctrine (President James E. Carter, 1977-81) did the U.S. have a commitment to send military forces to protect the Middle East. The U.S. attempted at various times to formulate some type of alliance with nations of the Middle East on the order of a NATO type organization, but this never happened.

However, the U.S. and Great Britain, following World War II, entered into an informal agreement that divided the world into areas of military responsibility. The British agreed to handle contingencies in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. The U.S. was responsible for the Pacific and the Atlantic areas. This informal agreement stayed in effect until the British withdrawal in 1971.

Europe, with its large population and industrial base,

remains the most important area of the world to the U.S. outside of North America.¹² The fundamental U.S. security interests in Europe are maintaining Western European strength and denying the Soviets the ability to control or coerce Western Europe politically or economically by military occupation, intimidation, or manipulation. In support of these interests, the U.S. has committed the bulk of its overseas forces to Europe. Only token forces are deployed elsewhere, e.g., Japan, the Middle East, and Latin American.¹³

The fundamental U.S. objective in East Asia is to ensure that any country or combination of countries hostile to the United States will not dominate the area. The elements which compose the Asian balance are multiple and fluid. They reflect the complex relations among the United States, the Soviet Union, China and Japan. The threats to current stability are also diverse, ranging from the possibility of armed attack across an established frontier in Korea to adventures in Southeast Asia, supported in varying degrees by some of the communist nations of Asia. The nations of concern in this region are North Korea and Vietnam.¹⁴

With China, the U.S. has a basic security interest in building constructive political and economic ties, even as efforts continue to lessen tensions with the Soviet Union.

The U.S.'s most important Asian ally is Japan. The U.S. seeks to preserve and strengthen its partnership in all fields with Japan. The U.S.-Japanese alliance is not only a central pillar of Japanese foreign policy, it is a crucial element of the stability achieved in Northeast Asia and in the maintenance of world-wide peace and security. Despite the modest size of its existing defense forces, Japan's economic power and political influence make it a key factor in the East Asian political and security situation.¹⁵

In Latin America, the U.S. interests are primarily political and economic. However, there are also important strategic military interests with respect to lines of communication and a source of allies. Concurrently, the stability of Latin America also remains important. A considerable portion of U.S. trade passes through the Caribbean and the Panama Canal. This area is too important to allow any nation not friendly with the U.S. to get a toe hold.¹⁶

In the Middle East, the crucial goals are the uninterrupted flow of oil and gas resources to the United States, Western Europe, and Japan and prevention of the spread of Soviet influence in the region. Tensions between Arab states and Israel jeopardize U.S. interests in this area and offer the Soviet Union opportunities for exploitation at U.S. expense.¹⁷

Arab hostility toward the friendly relationship

between the U.S. and Israel threatens any Gulf State that allies itself with the United States. This has resulted in the U.S. being denied basing rights in the Persian Gulf. Until an Arab-Israel peace accord is reached on the Palestinian cause, the U.S. relationship with Israel will continue to promote discord in the Middle East.

While the U.S. did attempt to integrate the Middle East into the West's global alliance system, this never happened. As a consequence the U.S. did not have any formal commitment to the Middle East until the Carter Doctrine in 1979. The withdrawal of British forces from the region in 1971 left the Middle East without a force to maintain stability. This was a weakness in U.S. strategy.¹⁸

The failure of Britain and the U.S. to reach an agreement on how to maintain Western military power in Southwest Asia led the Nixon Administration to attempt to make Iran and Saudi Arabia the two pillars of security in the Gulf. Iran was seen as the only local military power that could possibly halt Soviet expansion in the Gulf and secure Western interests in the region in the absence of a Western military presence. Saudi Arabia was seen as being able to stabilize the conservative states (Oman and Kuwait) in the Arabian Peninsula and as a friendly source of oil for the West.¹⁹

In the 1970s the power structure in the Middle East began to change, and, as a result, so did U.S. policies. The

first change to occur was the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 by a fanatical government hostile to the United States. The collapse of America's chief military client in the Persian Gulf removed a major, front-line military prop in the region and brought home the importance of continued Western access to vital oil supplies. It also emphasized how quickly access could be jeopardized by unexpected political events.²⁰

The second change was the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The U.S. felt the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan gave the Soviet Union the ability to provoke and intimidate adjacent nations. Concern was raised that Pakistan, a U.S. ally would be influenced by the presence of Soviet troops on its borders.

Also, the Soviets in Afghanistan could further worsen the separatist movement fomented by ethnic minorities in Pakistan. These groups could find Soviet support in Afghanistan that would provide them with both a sanctuary and a supply base to continue their insurgency. It was believed that a weak government in Afghanistan would somehow achieve the long-time Soviet goal of a warm water port.

The Afghanistan invasion established a new precedence for the Soviet Union. For the first time since World War II the Soviet Union used ground forces outside of Eastern Europe to support their cause.²¹ The invasion pointed out to the U.S. the growing Soviet influence in Central Asia.

These two events forced the Carter Administration to formally declare the Persian Gulf vital to the U.S. For the first time, the U.S. formally committed its military power to the defense of Southwest Asia. The strong Western economic ties to this area make it essential that the United States continuously promote regional stability, strengthen collective defense with its allies, and encourage defense cooperation with other friendly nations.²²

A third major factor to bring about a change in the U.S. Persian Gulf policy was the growing Soviet military capabilities and influence in the region. This was tied to the protection of U.S. and allied interests in the Pacific and East Asian regions which also require forward deployed forces and an ability to reinforce these forces quickly.²³

With the large number of U.S. interests and commitments around the world, it is imperative that the U.S. Navy increase the size of the fleet and not repeat the major mistake of reducing the fleet as it did following Vietnam. Until the end of the Vietnam War, the Navy had a total of 480 to 525 ships, including twelve to thirteen active attack aircraft carriers. For example, the Navy kept only five carriers deployed--two in the Mediterranean Sea and at least three in the Pacific, but none in the Indian Ocean. Table 1 shows the deployment of surface ships during 1974 by areas and type of ship.

Table 1. Selected U.S. Navy Surface Ships Deployed in 1974

	<u>Mediterranean</u>	<u>Pacific</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Total</u>
Aircraft Carriers	2	3	0	5
Helicopter Carriers	1	1	0	2
Cruisers and Frigates	4	5	0	9
Destroyers and Escorts	12	18	2	32
Amphibious Ships	4	7	0	11
Support Ships	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>31</u>
Total	33	54	3	90

Source: Arnold Moore. "General Purpose Forces Navy Marine Corps." in Arms, Men and Budgets Issues for FY77. (New York: Crain, 1976) p. 72.

This Table shows the concentration of U.S. Navy deployments in the Mediterranean Sea and the western Pacific Ocean.²⁴ The 1970's witnessed a substantial reduction in the U.S. Navy fleet. The post-Vietnam Navy was approximately 400 ships. The end result was the wide disparity between U.S. military commitments and resources in the 1970s.²⁵

From 1979 to 1987 the U.S. began to rebuild its forces. However, with the addition of Southwest Asia, especially the Persian Gulf, as an area of commitment, the wide disparity between U.S. commitments and resources continued until 1981.

In 1981 the incoming Reagan Administration committed itself to a global naval strategy. According to the Secretary of Defense Casper W. Weinberger, "given the Soviets' ability to launch simultaneous attacks in Southeast Asia, NATO and the Pacific, our long range goal of the U.S. is to be capable of defending all theaters simultaneously... [A 15 carrier battle group, 600 ship Navy will] restore and maintain maritime superiority over the Soviets." ²⁶ To meet all its commitments and counter the Soviet threat, the Navy needed the forces listed in Table 2.

Table 2. The Navy's Force Structure Goals for the 600 Ship Navy

20-40*	Ballistic Missile Submarines and Support Ships
15	Deployable Aircraft Carriers
4	Reactivated Battleships
100	Anti-air Warfare Cruisers and Destroyers
37	Antisubmarine Warfare Destroyers
101	Frigates
100	Nuclear-Powered Attack Submarines
14	Mine Countermeasures Ships
75	Amphibious Ships (MAF-plus-MAB Lift)
6	Patrol Combatants
65	Combat Logistics Ships
<u>60-65</u>	<u>Support Ships and Other Auxiliaries</u>
600	Deployable Battle Force Ships

*The force-level goal for strategic submarines has not been determined: the eventual force level will depend on arms reduction talks and other factors.

Source: Casper W. Weinberger. Annual Report to Congress FY88. (Washington D.C.:Government Office, 1988) p.163

The U.S.' inability to quickly surge its forces and still meet all its formal and informal commitments during the 1970-1979 and 1979-1988 periods caused our allies to seriously doubt the ability of the United States to honor all its commitments. This cloud of doubt in the minds of U.S. allies and the realization of its vulnerabilities in the Persian Gulf, forced the U.S. to develop viable and realistic political and military policies for that region.

Notes

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- ⁴ William W. Kaufmann. A Thoroughly Efficient Navy. (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution. 1987) p.14.
- ⁵ A study prepared for the Joint Economic Committee. The Persian Gulf: Are We Committed At What Cost? (Washington D.C., 1981) p.6
- ⁶ Joint and Combined Environments. Student Text 20-15. (Fort Leavenworth. KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, August 1988) p. 91.
- ⁷ John Lehman. Command of the Seas. (New York and Canada: Macmillan Publishing Company. 1988) p.139.
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- ¹¹ Cecil V. Crabb. The Doctrines Of American Foreign Policy. (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University. 1988) p.340.
- ¹² Caspar Weinberger. Annual Report to the Congress FY88. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office. 1981) p.35.
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CHAPTER 2

From the late 1940's until the early 1970's, the U.S. strategic policy required the Navy to maintain only a small naval presence in the Persian Gulf. This force was called the Mideast Force. The Mideast Force consisted of a flagship stationed in Bahrain and two destroyers or destroyer escorts on rotation assignments from other areas. The U.S. did not require a larger force because the British and Iranians protected its interest.

The purpose of the Middle East Force was to patrol the lanes of the Persian Gulf and show the flag. It was too small to have any significant influence on political or military actions in the region other than to show that the U.S. had some interest in the Persian Gulf. However, in the early 1970's, political and military events, forced the U.S. to develop new policies.

This chapter will discuss the development of the revised U.S. political and military policies in the Persian Gulf between 1970 and 1979. The author will show how key events in the region affected stability in the Persian Gulf.

The first and most significant event was the completion of the British withdrawal in 1971. The British based their withdrawal on the need to reduce commitments and spending. This announcement meant that the Gulf would lose the power that had dominated the region since the 1850s.

The U.S. took strong exception to Britain's decision to withdraw from the Gulf but was helpless to prevent it.¹

The second key event, which caused changes in the U.S. Persian Gulf policy was the Nixon Doctrine. The Nixon Doctrine was a result of the U.S. failure in Vietnam. The Nixon Doctrine limited the U.S. ability to send troops to the Persian Gulf, but permitted the U.S. to continue to meet its treaty commitments and furnish arms and economic assistance to any nation threatened by aggression. The Nixon Doctrine also required the threatened nations to provide their own troops.

In 1970, following the British forces departure from the region, another key event occurred. The Soviets started to build up their forces. The Soviets sent a Sverdlov class cruiser, two guided missile destroyers, and support ships to India Ocean. Once the Soviets started their buildup, the U.S. also saw a steady increase in the Soviet naval presence, Soviet military assistance to some of the littoral states, and an increase in the support facilities available to the Soviets military operations in the region.

In addition to increasing their assets in the Persian Gulf, the Soviets were developing friendly relationships with Somalia and Iraq. These relationships enabled the Soviets to build a communication station near the Somalia port of Berbera and gain access for its combat ships and support ships to the Iraqi naval port of Umm Qasr.²

The Soviets also established fleet anchorages and the use of an airfield from which reconnaissance flights could be conducted on the island of Socotra.³

In addition to increasing its naval presence while the U.S. overseas bases and military influence were declining, the Soviets were increasing their financial aid to countries in the region. For example, the Soviet Union provided massive arms transfers to Iran from 1978 to 1980. These arms transfers totaled \$4.5 billion. The Soviets provided South Yemen with 1100 Soviet military personnel in 1979 and 1000 Cubans and \$775 million in arms exports between 1976 and 1980.⁴ The Soviet support and assistance given to countries in the region greatly surpassed that of the U.S. and Soviet influence grew correspondingly.

Although aware of the growing Soviet influence in the region, the U.S. responded slowly. This slow response was due to the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and the lack of public and congressional support. Monies were being taken from shipbuilding, maintenance, and modernization and used to support combat operations in Vietnam.

To offset the increase of Soviet forces in the region, the U.S. Navy deployed carrier battlegroups to the Indian Ocean on an irregular basis. It soon became apparent that deployment of a carrier battlegroup to the region without facilities ashore or access to ports meant imposing unusually demanding logistical requirements and high costs.

on forces, resources and personnel.

When the U.S. sent a carrier battlegroup to the Arabian Sea during the 1973-74 Arab-Israeli War, the Navy realized the high cost of deploying a battlegroup into a region without support facilities. In order to maintain the battlegroup, the U.S. had to draw on a substantial portion of the oilers and other support ships available within the Seventh Fleet, thus seriously impairing the U.S. ability to support forces in the Western Pacific.⁵

In 1974, faced with the necessity for continuing carrier deployment to the area, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Chief of Naval Operations, went before Congress to request authorization and funding to expand the facilities on Diego Garcia. In addition to the communication station already there, the Navy wanted to build support facilities on the island.

Diego Garcia is an ideal location because it is strategically located, and like Socotra for the Soviets, it could support deployments and military operations in a number of ways. It is centrally located, uninhabited, and politically accessible. Politically accessible means that the location of Diego Garcia is far enough away from countries in the Persian Gulf that it does not signal superpower influence, and it is also far enough from the Asian land mass so as not to be threatened by other countries. Most importantly, it satisfies operational needs

without encountering the political liabilities associated with operations from or over some of the littoral states.⁶

The problem with the lack of bases in the Persian Gulf was clearly pointed out by Marine Lieutenant General Paul X. Kelly, Commander of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force: "When you talk about projecting combat power 7,000 miles and then sustaining it over the long haul, it boggles the mind. That's why it's absolutely essential that we have access to facilities in the region".⁷ Support facilities in port allow ships to conduct maintenance that can not be done at sea or maintenance procedures beyond the capability of assigned repair ships.

For example, when this officer was assigned to the USS Truett in the Persian Gulf in 1979, a critical repair to the ship's propulsion system had to be made. The repair was beyond the capability of the ship and required a shipyard. With the exception of Iranian facilities which the U.S. used at times to refuel ships, there was no place to do the repair except in Bahrain. The repair was done in Bahrain but not without a great deal of diplomatic action. This diplomatic action required one additional day.

The absence of this type of support to U.S. ships does not permit them to spend as much time in the Persian Gulf as the Soviets. The Soviet had a repair ship in the port of Berbers in Somali. This gave them the capability of repairing their ships.

Historically, the Soviets spent more ship days in the Indian Ocean than the US. This time in the Indian Ocean also allowed the Soviets to spend more time in the Persian Gulf. Table 3 shows the U.S. and Soviet ship days in the Indian Ocean from 1965 to 1979.

Table 3 Annual Ship Days In The Indian Ocean

Soviet Union	United States	
1965	-	1.100
1969	4.200	1.100
1972	1.500	1.100
1974	10.500	2.600
1976	7.600	1.400
1978	8.400	2.900
1979	7.600	4.200
1980	12.700	8.300
Total	52.500	22.700

Source: Alvin J. Cottrell and Michael L. Moodie, The United States and Persian Gulf. (New York: Crane, Russak and Company, Inc., 1976) p. 14

In 1980 the U.S. ship days were higher than in previous years.⁸ This was due to the attempted mission to rescue the U.S. hostages held in the American embassy in Iran. During this crisis four different aircraft carriers and thirty five ships rotated into and out of the Indian Ocean operating area.⁹ It should be remembered that this deployment was made in response to a temporary emergency situation: hence, the high number of ship days in 1980 did

not necessary constitute a radical departure from previous official thinking. The overall low number of U.S. ship days is a result of the lack of facilities in the region.

In addition to lacking ships and support facilities, the U.S. lacked sufficient political and public support to send naval forces to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.¹⁰ According to Author Cecil Crabb, "public support and congressional opinions are important to a nation's diplomatic undertaking."¹¹ He went on to say, the absence of this political and public support contributed to the U.S. Navy's difficulties in obtaining enough ships to meet its commitments in the Persian Gulf.

The post-Vietnam War, anti-defense spending attitude resulted in severe budget cuts which constrained the Navy build up in the 1970s. Public opinion forced Congress to decrease defense spending. This, in turn, forced the Navy to delay its shipbuilding, maintenance, and modernization programs. These actions, coupled with the fact that the Navy diverted building and modernization funding in order to support the Vietnam War, further compounded the Navy's problems in meeting its commitments.

Another factor which forced the U.S. to change its Persian Gulf Policy from one of a "passive" presence to one of "power" presence was the Arab nations' growing economic power. The Arab nations' power increased because their control of oil gave them leverage over the U.S. and its

allies. This leverage and how it could be used against U.S. interests was clearly demonstrated in the Oil Embargo of 1973. The recognition of this leverage was another key event that forced the U.S. to change its policies in the Middle East.

One particular area where this was apparent was the manner in which the U.S. treated the Palestine problem. The U.S.' and Israel's failure to recognize Palestinian self-determination has contributed to instability in the Persian Gulf. Arab countries used their leverage of oil to focus U.S. attention on the issues of the Palestinians over the objections of Israel.

The economic and diplomatic effect of the oil embargo clearly highlighted immense strategic importance of the Persian Gulf nations to the U.S. and its allies. The U.S. and its allies also had an unquestionably vital economic stake in ensuring an uninterrupted flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to the West.

In addition to the economic and diplomatic factors, the Soviet Navy buildup in the Persian Gulf in the 1970s significantly influenced development of U.S. policy for the Persian Gulf.¹² By the late 1970's the Soviet fleet had increased to some 1,700 ships. The U.S. fleet dropped from 950 ships in 1969 to 479 in 1979.¹³ Referring to this decrease, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, former Chief of Naval Operations, said in his memoirs that "none of us in the

military thought we had much capability to meet commitments and all of us were under heavy pressure not to let on." As a matter of fact, his public testimony which referred to the U.S. Navy's capability as being adequate, marginal, inadequate or inferior compared to the Russian was purged from public record by the Pentagon.¹⁴ Tables 4 and 5 below show the total number of Soviet and U.S. ships from 1970 to 1980.¹⁵

Table 4 Number of Soviet Ships

Year	Number of Soviet Ships	Displacement (Million Tons)
1970	984	1.7
1975	1,006	3.2
1980	978	2.4

Source: Arnold Moore "General Purpose Forces Navy Marine Corp" in Arms, Men and Budget Issues for FY77. (New York: Crane, Inc., 1976) p. 64

Table 5 Number of United States Ships

Year	Number of US Ships	Displacement (Million Tons)
1970	672	3.9
1975	574	3.6
1980	444	3.4

Source: Arnold Moore. "General Purpose Forces Navy Marine Corps" in Arms, Men and Budget Issues for FY77. p. 74.

These Tables show that the Soviets were building a formidable navy while the U.S. Navy was losing ships because of mothballing, deactivation and cut backs in defense spending. Former President Carter finally recognized this trend and requested more defense funding.

The fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 was yet another event which forced the U.S. to change it's policies in the Persian Gulf. The Shah of Iran's inability to manage his own government and Iran's economy and the U.S. reluctance to send ships in the area to show its commitment to support its allies contributed to the Shah's downfall.¹⁶

There were at least two instances in which the Carter administration could have sent in naval forces to show our commitment to our allies in the Persian Gulf.

The first incident was the U.S. refusal to send the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk into the Persian Gulf during the Ethiopian - Somalia Conflict of 1979. The carrier would have demonstrated to the Shah of Iran and Saudi Arabia the U.S. commitment to the Arabian Sea.

The second incident was when the U.S. refused to send the carrier Constellation to the Arabian Sea during the height of the Iranian revolution. Instead, the carrier was sent only as far as the Malacca Straits. With the exception of the ships stationed in Bahrain, the U.S. had only enough ships for periodic deployments and could not surge enough

naval ships to meet this crisis without taking assets, resources, and monies from other areas. ¹⁷

The inadequate show of naval force and support for the Shah were seen as a lack of U.S. concern for its friends in the Persian Gulf. Although it is doubtful that the Shah's downfall could have been prevented by the U.S., the poor deployment of U.S. naval forces hastened it. The lack of U.S. deployment was caused by the lack of ships, the lack of forward deployed bases in the Persian Gulf, the "Europe first " policy, and an unsympathetic public and congress.

In summary, the seventies were difficult times for the U.S. and its policies in the Persian Gulf. Key events stateside and in the Persian Gulf forced the U.S. to change its policy from a "passive" to a "power" presence. The post-Vietnam anti-defense attitude and severe defense budget cuts, the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, the Shah's downfall, and the growing economic power of the Arab nations were the key events during the period 1970-1979 which caused major changes to the U.S. Persian Gulf Policies.

Although the U.S. made significant changes in the 1970s with regards to its Persian Gulf policies, events and problems in the 1980s would bring about further changes.

Notes

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- 4 Anthony H. Cordesman. The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1984) p. 899.
- 5 A study prepared for. Committee on Foreign Relation. Briefing on Diego Garcia and Patrol Frigate. Washington D.C. 1975. p.4.
- 6 Ibid.. p.4.
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- 8 Alvin J. Cottrell and Michael J. Moodie The United States and Persian Gulf. (New York: National Strategy Information Center. 1986) p. 14.
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- 12 John F. Lehman. Command at Sea. (New York and Canada: Macmillan Publishing Co.. 1986) p.99.
- 13 Ibid.. p.117.
- 14 Ibid.. p.117.
- 15 Arnold Moore. "General Purpose Forces Navy and Marine Corp" in Arms, Men and Military Budget, Issues for Fiscal Year 1977. eds. William Schneider and Francis P. Hoerber. (New York: Crane, Russak. 1976) pp.121-129.

16 Cottrell and Moodie. The United States and Persian Gulf.
p.48.

17 Cottrell and Moodie. The United States and the Persian Gulf.p.4

CHAPTER 3

This chapter analyzes the continued development of Persian Gulf policies and employment of naval forces in the region from 1979 to 1988. Three events forced the United States to take a firmer stand concerning the Persian Gulf and reevaluate the use of U.S. naval forces. These events were, first, the continuing effects of the overthrow of the Shah of Iran by a government unfriendly to the U.S.; second, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979; and, third, the 1979 oil crisis.¹ These events resulted in the Soviets being in a good position to influence events in the Persian Gulf.²

These events and the memory of the 1973 oil embargo led the United States to declare the Persian Gulf as vital to its interests.³ These events, which threatened peace and stability in the Persian Gulf, forced the U.S. to assume the role of the chief Western military force in the region. The new role resulted in the United States dedication of specific forces to respond to crises in the Persian Gulf region. For the first time, the United States let the world know it would use military force to protect its interests there.

The fall of the Shah of Iran removed one of the pillars of stability and security in the region by removing the major ally on whom the United States depended. The Shah's government was replaced by a radically

anti-Western, fundamentalist Islamic government. The actions taken by this government to stay in power and to spread anti-Western feeling throughout the Middle East threatened the stability of the region.

The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan of 1979, threatened even greater instability in the region. The fear of a Soviet military advance created a new sense of urgency.

The United States perceived the invasion as a large Soviet thrust into Southwest Asia. The fear of such a Soviet military drive did a great deal to foster widespread support for a stepped up U.S. military presence in the region.⁴

The 1979 oil crisis was, in part a result of collapse of the Shah of Iran's government and the resultant temporary loss of oil production. The price of oil shot up, and the dependence of the Western World on Persian Gulf oil at virtually any price caused economic panic in the Western world. As Walter J. Levy stated in his article, Oil and the Decline of the West. A temporary decline in world oil production led to apprehensions by importing countries and their oil companies that they might be unable to cover their future needs. Accordingly importers tried to obtain added supplies and to increase stocks at almost any cost. This in turn, resulted in panic buying of large uncontrolled and escalating spot oil prices."⁵

The Soviets' increased naval presence in the Persian Gulf demonstrated their ability to project significant naval

power and their ability to support their forces away from home. In 1979, the carriers Midway and Kitty Hawk were temporarily ordered to the Arabian Sea.

The crisis in Afghanistan and the fall of the Shah, forced Defense Secretary Harold Brown to admit that, "although our emphasis has been on preparation to fight in Europe, recent events have made it clear that some of our forces must be configured for rapid deployment."⁶ After the fall of the Shah, Saudi Arabia was unable to maintain stability in the area, so the United States assumed the role left by the overthrow of the Shah. The United States increased its military presence to reaffirm its commitments to our friends and allies in the region.⁷ The United States increased the size of the Middle East Force from three to five ships.

From 1979 until late 1981, the U.S. and Soviet navies each had about twenty-five to thirty-two ships in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. Since 1981, the U.S. Navy has alternately deployed one carrier battlegroup from the Atlantic Fleet or the Pacific Fleet to the Arabian Sea.⁸ In addition, the United States has enhanced its basing infrastructure in Kenya, Somalia, Oman and in Egypt.⁹

President Carter made it clear during his State of the Union Address to Congress in 1980 that he considered the Persian Gulf vital to U.S. interests and would do whatever was necessary to maintain peace and stability in the area.¹⁰

The Carter Doctrine informed the world of the United States' resolve to use force to protect its vital interests in the Persian Gulf. Not until the Carter Doctrine was U.S. military power committed so emphatically to the region's defense. The result was the U.S. establishing the Rapid Deployment Force in 1979, subsequently renamed United States Central Command (USCENTCOM).

The Rapid Deployment force was established to prevent or deter the Soviets from interfering in Southwest Asia. Also, the Rapid Deployment Force was specifically trained and equipped to respond quickly to a crisis in Southwest Asia. One draw back to this force was that the assets had to be drawn from the Atlantic and Pacific fleets.¹¹

On paper this force was made up of three carrier battlegroups and one surface action group.¹² But following the fall of the Shah, the United States maintained two carrier battlegroups in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean instead of three. The two carrier battlegroups were only in the region during the U.S. hostage crisis. Following the departure of one battlegroup in October 1981, the commitment has remained at one carrier battlegroup.

While this greatly strengthened the U.S. presence in the region, it created a two-sided problem for the Navy. First, the carrier forces were siphoned off from the Atlantic Fleet and the Pacific Fleet. This meant that these fleets were operating without some of the major units which

were assigned to them, degrading their ability to respond to other crisis.¹³

The other side of the problem was the Rapid Deployment force did not have permanently assigned ships. The "home fleets" could recall the carriers to meet contingencies in the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans. This would leave the Rapid Defense Force without any carrier forces.

Nonetheless, for the first time, the United States was developing a large force that could quickly respond to a crisis in the Persian Gulf. Fueling the U.S. efforts was Iran's quest to be the dominant nation in the region. Iran's war with Iraq further threatened stability of the Gulf.

However, President Carter provided very little increased defense funding for increasing the U.S. naval presence in the region. Defense resources increased an average of only 1.5 per cent per year, clearly insufficient to support the Navy, with its new Persian Gulf commitments.

The Reagan administration, however, (1981 to 1987) dramatically built-up the U.S. fleet.¹⁴ Table 6 shows the result of this buildup.

Table 6 Size of U.S. Fleet

	FY 1980	FY 1984	FY 1987
Submarine Forces	48	41	45
Destroyer Forces	384	425	445
Support Ships Forces	41	46	59
Reserve Ships Forces	6	12	18
Total forces	479	524	569

Source: Casper W. Weinberger. Annual Report to Congress FY 88. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office. 1986) p. 66.

As Table 6 shows, there was an increase of 20 ships during the Reagan Administration. This increase included new ships as well as four reactivated battleships. The increase helped meet the heavy demands of the Persian Gulf and still maintain the capability to deploy naval forces to other crisis areas without drawing down on committed forces.¹⁵

The four reactivated battleships were a "quick fix" to help meet U.S. global commitments, including those in the Indian Ocean. The additional firepower provided by the battleships' large guns enhanced the deterrent effect of the U.S. naval presence in the Indian Ocean area.¹⁶ Unlike a carrier, which has to be stationed in the Arabian Sea to support operations in the Persian Gulf, the battleships could move into the Persian Gulf itself.

From the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, the U.S. sought a diplomatic solution to the conflict through the United Nations. The war clearly threatened U.S. interests in the Gulf. Iran's quest for regional dominance--and Soviet exploitation of the conflict caused--great concern for the U.S.

The U.S. was concerned that the war would spill over into other countries in the Gulf and the Arabian peninsula. The U.S. publicly and privately repeated its firm commitment

to maintaining stability in the Gulf.¹⁷ As the war escalated and both sides incurred economic hardships and substantial casualties, they took desperate measures to compensate for their losses. For example, in 1985 Iraq threatened to attack, and on some occasions did attack, Iranian and other nation's oil tankers in the process of loading at Iranian ports. In retaliation, Iran threatened to attack any ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz and threatened to block the Strait itself.

The fighting kept both Iran and Iraq preoccupied and bogged down. In 1986, Iran focused on intimidating Kuwait, a small and militarily weak state that, like others in the Gulf, supported Iraq politically and economically. To punish Kuwait for this, Iran unleashed a war of terrorism against Kuwait, sabotaging its oil facilities and attacking its shipping.¹⁸

Because of this in 1987 Kuwait asked for U.S. protection of its tankers. U.S. law, however, does not allow the Navy to protect foreign ships. Before the Navy could escort the Kuwaiti tankers, they had to be reflagged (registered as U.S. ships). In order to regain the credibility lost when it could not prevent the overthrow of the Shah and the invasion of Afghanistan, the United States agreed to "reflag" the tankers. This operation gave the U.S. the Navy a legal basis to protect the ships and demonstrate

support for the free navigation of the Persian Gulf by nonbelligerent shipping.

The U.S. Navy conducted its first escort mission on 22 July 1987 with U.S. naval ships escorting the Bridgeton and Gas Prince from the Gulf of Oman to Kuwait.

The transit continued uneventfully through the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf until the USS Samuel Roberts hit a mine near an Iranian island in the Persian Gulf. The mining of the Persian Gulf brought a new aspect to the war. The U.S. did not have any minesweepers in the area and only six in the inventory. When the USS Samuel Roberts hit a mine, the U.S. had only six thirty-five year old reserve minesweepers that should have already been retired. None of them were fully manned and all were in poor condition because the Navy saw other commitments for monies and men as more important. This was another case where economic policy prevented the Navy from having sufficient resources to meet a threat. As a result, the Navy had difficulties trying to surge the minesweepers to meet the crisis. Until the minesweepers reached the Persian Gulf, the United States flew in mine countermeasure helicopters to conduct the minesweeping operation.¹⁹

The shipping war reached new heights of violence in 1987. As shown in Table 7, Iraqi attacks exceeded the 1986 level. Iran conducted almost twice as many attacks as they did in 1986.

Table 7 Persian Gulf Ship Attacks

	1984	1985	1986	1987	Total
Iran	27	40	65	83	215
Iraq	16	13	41	80	150

Source: General George B. Crist. Statement before Senate Armed Committee on the Status of the United States Central Command (AFB, Florida: U.S. Public Affairs Office, 1988, p. 98

The Iranians added another dimension to the crisis when they used Silkworm missiles against ships inside Kuwaiti waters. This required a U.S. response. In an effort to intimidate the Iranians and discourage them from using the Silkworm missiles the United States maintained more than thirty ships including, at times, two carriers in the region.

After this, Iran developed a new tactic. Using fifty speed boats armed with machine guns and rocket launchers, Iran harassed shipping with hit and run tactics. As the threat in the Persian Gulf evolved from the introduction of mines to Silkworm missiles and finally small boat attacks, U.S. force structure and operating procedure changed.

This dramatically affected the small Middle East Joint Task force's ability to handle command and control for their increasing assets. As a result, the United States established the position of Commander, Task Force Middle East to coordinate and direct joint operations in the Persian Gulf. This command included the U.S. Middle East

Force, deployed carrier battlegroups, mine warfare forces, and the Battleship Battlegroup temporarily assigned to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea.

The Soviet naval presence in the region also grew. The Soviet navy maintained a Kara-class cruiser, a Kashin-class destroyer, three mine sweepers, and several support ships in the region. In May 1987, Soviet combatants began escort operations for three Kuwaiti-chartered, Soviet-owned and flagged tankers. The Soviets also escorted twenty-six arms carriers loaded with military hardware bound for Iraq to and from Kuwait during 1987.

Throughout 1987, the Soviets continued to take advantage of their repair facilities at Ethiopia's Dehalak Island in the Red Sea for routine maintenance and upkeep on their deployed units. This Soviet presence was high but still below the past levels of 1980 following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

With the exception of Diego Garcia, the United States lacked bases in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean area. To improve support facilities for U.S. forces in the area, the U.S. invested money in supplies and in building of ports and airfields in Oman. The United States had relatively free access to the airfield on Masirah in Oman and was able to preposition supplies and spare parts for U.S. forces in the region. Although the U.S. had greater use of the Omani ports: at Muscat and Salalah during and following the

Persian Gulf crisis. the use of these facilities in the event of future crises was not guaranteed

The period from 1979 to 1988 saw continued changes in the U.S. political and military policies in the Gulf. These involved establishment of the Rapid Deployment Force, the stationing of more ships in the area to protect U.S. interests, and the development of more support facilities in Diego Garcia and Oman. However, with no guarantee that the United States will be able to use the Oman facilities, U.S. policies still require changes and development. These changes must include access to ports and air bases in the Persian Gulf. If this is not done, the long periods of deployments--required as a result of few forward deployed bases--will continue to strain and negatively affect personnel and materiel readiness.

Notes

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- ³ Ibid.. p.30.
- ⁴ Robert G. Darius. John W. Amos. and Ralph H. Magnus. Gulf Security Into The 1980s. (Stanford. CA: Hoover Institution Press. 1980) p.93.
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CHAPTER 4

In addition to bringing about changes in the U.S. political and military policies and increasing commitments for a Navy that was already being pushed to the limits, the Persian Gulf operations negatively affected the materiel and personnel readiness of Naval units. This chapter discusses how and why this happened.

The materiel readiness of a unit consists of two elements. One is the status of the equipment (ships, aircraft) and supplies (ammunition, spare parts) on hand relative to what is required during wartime. The other is the ability of the equipment to perform its required function.¹

Personnel readiness of naval forces consists of two similar factors. These are the number of people on hand relative to what is required to go to war and the status of the training they received to do their wartime jobs.²

As discussed earlier, the U.S. military budgets were significantly reduced following the Vietnam War resulting in a decline in the number of naval ships. However, there was no decline in the Navy's global commitments. To meet its commitments the Navy was forced to push its equipment and people to the limit. As long as the U.S. has the same level of commitments, cutting back on ships to increase the burden on the remaining ships and sailors.

Equipment was not adequately maintained and an adequate number of people were not recruited or retained.

Consequently, the Navy had ships that were not overhauled on schedule: ships' inventories were below the minimum required: ships' equipment did not perform as required: and ships deployed with not enough people to sail them.

In the 1970's the U.S. could not fill the magazines of all its 479 ships at the same time.³ The Navy had a one-third of the minimum operational requirements of ship and aircraft parts. Funding dedicated to overhauling ships had been diverted to support the Vietnam War. This created a backlog of twenty-six ships waiting to be overhauled because of a lack of funding.⁴

Carriers that normally carried 180 days worth of parts for aircraft maintenance only carried 60 days of supplies. This caused a serious degradation of aircraft availability. Of 21 aircraft aboard the Eisenhower examined in a routine check in 1980, only five were mission capable.⁵

The Persian Gulf operations of the 1970s affected the Navy's personnel readiness more than the operations of the 1980s. Low pay, desertion, and long deployments resulted in a steep drop in morale and the quality of men and women coming into and staying in the armed forces.⁶ For example, the John F. Kennedy operated in the Indian Ocean for 125 straight days without liberty. She was relieved by the Eisenhower which stayed in the area for 140 days without liberty. When the ships returned home at the end of their

eight month deployments. eight-five percent of the crew left the Navy at the end of their obligated service.⁷

In the 1970's desertions further decreased manning. The rate of desertion reached 30.2 percent of (1000 enlisted men) in fiscal year 1978.⁸ First term reenlistment dropped below ten percent, less than one-third of the Navy's goal.⁹ The manning problems the Navy had in the 1970s carried over into the 1980s.

In 1980. Under Secretary of Defense (Research and Development) William Perry asked. "...how do we accommodate a NATO buildup and Persian Gulf buildup at the same time as we are deploying forces to the Persian Gulf." Chief of Naval Operations. Thomas B. Hayward said that a "one-and-one-half ocean navy could not meet the three ocean commitments" imposed by the Carter Doctrine.¹⁰ This clearly meant the Navy could not meet the commitments its government hoped it could.

The Navy realized it did not have enough ships to undertake Persian Gulf operations without taking forces away from the Atlantic and the Pacific fleet to meet the increased commitment. The problem of using forces already committed to other areas further affected the shortfall in materiel and personnel readiness.¹¹ This shortfall meant that sailors had to work harder and longer to maintain their ships. This, in turn, affected manning. For example, in 1980 the aircraft carrier Nimitz was kept in the Indian

Ocean for over three months during the hostage crisis. This long period at sea seriously affected the morale and performance of the crew.¹²

Following the fall of the Shah of Iran, the United States realized it had to change its naval policy and permanently deploy one carrier battlegroup to the Arabian Sea. So, in addition to increasing its Middle East Force from three to five ships, the Navy, already undermanned and underfunded, took on the added burden of an increased presence in the Arabian Sea to support the Persian Gulf operations.

As mentioned previously the Navy established the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) in 1980 to respond to crisis in the Persian Gulf. This force came from the Atlantic and Pacific fleets which were responsible for the defense of Europe and the Far East.¹³

As tensions increased in the region, ships spent longer periods of time at sea. This decreased morale and retention. The following testimony by Commodore Edward W. Clexton in a Senate Armed Service committee hearing illustrates this point.

...our men do not get any liberty over there... When the Dwight D. Eisenhower was there in 1979, they spent 255 days that year at sea and 160 days on station in the Indian Ocean. That's...five months that they were under an alert condition...the retention on the Eisenhower after that year was 19 percent. The retention rate for the rest of the Navy was 30 percent.¹⁴

On 29 May 1987, the United States committed to a plan to protect the Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf. This required the U.S. to add thirty additional ships to the force in region. At the same time, the Navy's operational tempo increased. To maintain this force the fleet commander borrowed assets and resources from the non-deployed fleets to give to the deployed fleet.

The 1988 Secretary of Defense's annual budget report to the Congress supported 50.5 steaming days per quarter for forward deployed units (6th and 7th Fleets) and 29 days for home steaming units (2nd and 3rd Fleets).¹⁵ Admiral Hays, Commander in Chief United Pacific Command, testifying before the Senate in 1979 said:

We have had to do some resorting to ensure that we had funds to cover the operational cost of deploying to the Persian Gulf. As a result, the steaming hours and the operational tempo of the rest of the fleet had given a bit...we do have to relocate the funds and something has to give to sustain that operation there."¹⁶

Table 8 below shows there was an increase in operation of Sixth and Seventh Fleets which include the forward deployed units supporting the Persian Gulf operation. Both fleets used more than the 50.5 steaming days (time underway) allocated in the budget. The figure also shows that the home fleets (Second and Third Fleet) used less than the 29 days they were budgeted. The steaming days were taken from the home fleets to support

the deployed fleets' Persian Gulf operation. The net effect was the home fleet had fewer days underway for training the crew.

Table 8 Fiscal Year 1987 Fleet Steaming Days

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Annual	
	Qtr	Qtr	Qtr	Qtr	Avg.	
2nd Flt	24.4	27.7	30.1	30.0	28.1	Home
6th Flt	52.1	57.5	50.2	51.3	52.8	
3rd Flt	25.2	25.2	25.6	27.6	25.9	Home
7th Flt	46.0	60.4	47.3	60.1	53.5	

Source: Frank Elliott. "The Navy in 1987"
U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1986,
 p.147

To support the increased operation tempo, the personnel end strength of the Navy was increased from 527,200 in 1980 to 593,200 in 1988. This meant that the Navy had to increase its recruiting efforts in order to fill the 66,000 billets. Retention goals also increased. For example, the Navy's retention goal for 1980 was 48.2%

of first term and career (those on their second or third enlistment) sailors. In 1982 the goal had increased to 63.6%, and by 1988, the goal was 68.4%. Because of the increased emphasis on retention of trained personnel, the manning problems of the early 1980's were reduced. The activation of the Navy's minesweepers in response to incidents in the Persian Gulf did, however, force attention on a remaining problem.¹⁷

At the height of the Iranian Persian Gulf mining operations the Navy had problems manning the six minesweepers that were to be deployed to the Persian Gulf. The three mine sweepers coming from the active force were only manned to 40 percent of their basic allowance. The three reserve ships were only manned to 35 percent. Before these ships deployed to the Persian Gulf the Navy had to bring them up to 100 percent of their wartime allowance. The ships deployed with their full personnel allowance, but not without difficulties. The personnel shortages were filled by the volunteers from the active fleet.

The significant strides made in recruiting and retention in the early 1980s were stopped by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act of 1985. Under this act if certain budget goals are not met, budget cuts across all agencies automatically took place. To meet the goals of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings, the Navy immediately cut its budget. The

Navy received a five percent cut in personnel and ship construction.

The initial budget cuts for the Navy came in the areas of recruiting and shipping. Table 9 shows the Navy percentage of the annual recruiting goals achieved and the growth of the fleet from 1982 to 1988. Both columns shows growth until 1985 (the year the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act became law). The size of the fleet continued to increase, but at a slower rate. In 1985, 29 new ships joined the fleet. After 1985, the highest number of new ships joining the fleet in one year was 15 in 1987 and 1988.

Table 9 Recruiting Goals and Composition of Naval Forces

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>RECRUITMENT (% OF GOAL)</u>	<u>SIZE OF THE FLEET</u>
1982.....	63.....	507 Ships
1983.....	68.....	513 (+6)
1984.....	68.4.....	525 (+12)
1985.....	66.1.....	554 (+29)
1986.....	67.8.....	562 (+8)
1987.....	66.1.....	577 (+15)
1988.....	65.1.....	592 (+15)

Sources: George E. Hudson and Joseph Kruzal. American Defense Annual 1985-1986. (Lexington, MA: Mershon Center, 1985) p. 102; Annual Report, Navy Military Personnel Statistics. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985). pp. 116-117.

Reduced recruiting goals established to meet the constraints of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings act affected other personnel areas too. To support the increase in manning for ships deployed or activated for the Persian Gulf operation, the Navy decreased its number of shore billets by 7% so it could increase the number of sea billets. Because there were fewer shore billets, the rotation time between sea and shore billets for sailors was increased. This meant that a sailor in a sea billet had to wait longer for a shore billet to open up to rotate to it. This in turn meant longer family separation for sailors in sea billets, and also increased the workload for those in shore billets.¹⁸

While the Persian Gulf was not solely responsible for the decline in personnel readiness, it compounded other problems. One example is family separation or the fear of it. Just as retention of personnel is critical to readiness, so is reasonable family separation time critical to retention. According to a Navy survey, family separation is the number one reason people leave the Navy.¹⁹

In an effort to reduce periods the separation, Chief of Naval Operations, set a goal of six months maximum deployment. However, this goal was not met through 1988. Deployment periods averaged slightly over six months.

In addition to causing longer working hours and longer deployments, the Persian Gulf operations affected one other critical personnel area--the payroll of Navy personnel. According to the Chief of Naval Personnel, "The Navy did not have enough money in the personnel account to pay the number of people...in the Navy. The "imminent danger pay" paid to the personnel in the Persian Gulf contributed to this shortfall." ²⁰ To meet the payroll the Navy allowed people to get out of the Navy a few months early and reduced other monies available for personnel training. ²¹

The missile attack on the USS Stark on 17 May 1987, and the shooting down of an Iranian airliner highlighted yet another problem created by the Persian Gulf-- personnel stress in a wartime situation. Chaplain William Smith of the Stark's squadron was intimately aware of such stress. He told this author "The constant fears before and after the missile attack on the Stark contributed to a large number of personnel getting out of the Navy. Following the Stark's return from the Persian Gulf, a higher than usual percent of her crew got out of

the Navy when their enlistment was up." ²²

Whenever families are separated, expenses are higher. The \$1 a day that a sailor receives for family separation does not even come close to meeting additional expenses the separation creates. In addition extremely small pay raises (an average of only 3 percent under Carter administration) and the extremely high inflation rate of the late 1970 imposed severe financial strains on those deployed to the Persian Gulf. Wives had to borrow money from Navy Relief, a support fund for Navy personnel and their families.

Military families receiving assistance and interest free loans from Navy Relief offices increased by 10.6 percent during the peak periods of the Persian Gulf crisis. This includes world wide Navy relief assistance, but is indicative of the pressure put on the entire Navy community by Persian Gulf operations. ²³

Testifying before Congress, Admiral Ronald J. Hays, Commander Chief, U.S. Pacific Command and Admiral Lee Baggett, Jr., Command in Chief U.S. Atlantic Command, supplies of forces to the Persian Gulf, agreed that the Gulf operation cut into steaming hours, flying hours and training days. According to Admiral Baggett "reduction in the tempo of operations and flying hours to make up for expenditures in the Persian Gulf are starting to affect us..." ²⁴

During the 1987-1988 Persian Gulf operations, the Navy had more than thirty ships in the Persian Gulf at one time. Estimates of the cost of the Persian Gulf operation vary. John Haldane, a writer for the Christian Science Monitor estimated the cost to U.S. taxpayers was almost \$1 billion in 1987.²⁵ The Center of Defense Information in Washington estimated that \$400 million was spent by the Pentagon in 1987. From mid-July through the end of September, 1988 period along the Pentagon estimated that they spent over \$ 70 million.²⁶

While experts disagree about the exact figures, costs were astronomical. The United States paid a lot to clearly maintain the stability in the Persian Gulf. The cost not only included money, but a decline in materiel and personnel readiness.

Overall, the highest cost may have been the negative effects of Persian Gulf operations on the Navy's personnel and materiel readiness. The decrease in recruiting and retention because of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act. The increase manning requirements of an increased operating tempo had an adverse effect on Navy personnel. Longer family separations, and stress, aggravated the recruiting and retention problems.

The increase tempo of operation also affected the training of personnel. Steaming days used to train personnel were taken from the home fleets and given to

the deployed fleets for operations in the Persian Gulf.

As a result, personnel readiness decreased.

The net effect was the Navy had trouble surging ships and people in support of operations in the Persian Gulf while still meeting its normal commitments.

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CONCLUSION

During the past three decades, the U.S. Navy was involved in several world crises in which the political and military of the United States strategies were projected, supported or pursued. These included the Cuban crisis, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf operations. Each of the these operations showed that the U.S. Navy could successfully achieve its missions, but not without difficulty.

The primary causes of this difficulty were that the Navy did not have enough ships, people, or forward deployed bases to quickly respond to crises around the world. The Navy's ability to surge its forces to meet pending crises and still meet its day-to-day operations is limited. To support this assessment, the author used the Persian Gulf operations of the 1970s and 1980s as a case study.

This paper defined the U.S. political and military strategy and the effect key events had on that strategy. Key events such as the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf in 1971, the 1970 Nixon Doctrine and the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 forced the U.S. to change from a "passive" to "power" presence policy in the Persian Gulf.

With this change in policy, the Navy's commitments and missions increased. This larger Navy role occurred with a much smaller post-Vietnam fleet and budget. Because of this

the Navy had to reallocate ships, people and money to accomplish its mission.

In spite of the reallocations of its resources, the Navy was still forced to push its ships and people to the limit because of too few ships and not enough money. In doing so the Navy's materiel and personnel readiness declined.

Ship repair and overhaul schedules were delayed, repair parts inventories decreased, and there was a marked decline in personnel retention, recruiting and morale. For the first time in recent history, the Navy had problems obtaining enough people to fully man its ships.

Along with the mounting costs of the Persian Gulf operations, the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act of 1985 affected the Navy's ability to surge its forces to counter the crisis and meet its day-to-day commitments.

Based on the facts and situations this presented in this paper, it is clear that the U.S. government and the Navy must take five key actions to increase the Navy's ability to surge its forces and respond quickly to crisis in the world.

First, Congress must immediately appropriate the funds to achieve the goal of a 600-ship Navy. Without these ships, the Navy will always be in extremis in trying to accomplish its mission. The author acknowledges the fact that building this fleet is not politically feasible because of budget

constraints brought on by the federal deficit. However, this does not mean the requirement for the 600-ship Navy is lessened. Until the size of the fleet supports the size of the commitments, the U.S. will still find it difficult to meet multiple contingencies.

Second, the Navy must continue to emphasize the retention of qualified and trained personnel. For those individuals that do get out, the Navy should develop incentives for them to remain in the reserve force. Retention of personnel and the use of reserve assets are the fastest means of surging personnel during crises.

Third, the United States must continue its efforts to obtain basing rights for ships in strategic parts of the world. Access to bases in foreign countries will decrease crisis response time, enhance the ability of the Navy to sustain itself, and reduce the time people are away from home.

Fourth, the United States must convince allies and other countries in or near the Persian Gulf area to assume more responsibility for protecting their national and international interests. This will save assets and monies and allow the United States to respond more effectively to multiple crises.

Fifth, the United States could consider altering some of its other global commitments. In addition to its Persian Gulf obligations the forty-three or more treaties that bind

the it to commitments around the world. The United States must insist that our stronger allies, such as Japan and European countries, take on more responsibility for their own defense. In the third-world countries, however, we would be opening the door for Soviet influence if we reneged on our commitments.

These recommendations are by no means an inclusive list; however, the implementation of any one of them will significantly improve the Navy's ability to surge its forces in a crisis.

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